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Contacts With Hanoi Still Futile, Rusk Says

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Journal Washington Bureau

Washington, D. C.—The United States is in almost continuous contact with the leaders of North Vietnam, but still has not been able to find the path to peace, Secretary of State Rusk declared Wednesday.

"We are in touch with the other side regularly — every week," he told the White House conference on international cooperation as it closed three days of discussions on 30 areas of world problems.

Rusk, recognizing the sharp complaints on Vietnam made at the conference by some of the distinguished citizens in the audience, said United States leaders needed "your prayers, not your imprecations."

Seeking peace in the world, he noted, "is a question that makes pygmies of all of us."

Rusk also reiterated a warning that "in South Vietnam we have a commitment."

"There are capitals that could make a tragic miscalculation if they became convinced that the American commitment will not be met," he declared.

"Tens of thousands of infiltrators have been sent to impose a solution by force on the people of South Vietnam. If you wish to deny this, you will find yourself out of date. The other side is not denying it."

Bombing Pause Cited

At the same time, Rusk said, the United States always would be "one-half step ahead, not one-half step behind" in the search for peace.

State department officials later said Rusk's reference to weekly contacts with the enemy

did not indicate any accelerated rate of negotiations for peace talks.

Instead, they said, it was meant to emphasize that the problem was not a lack of communication.

Rusk's comment came in response to a written question from Norman Cousins, editor of the Saturday Review, which attacked United States bombing raids on North Vietnam.

Rusk said that when the United States stopped bombing for five days in May, no Communist country requested an extension of the bombing moratorium.

CIA Role Defended

Furthermore, he said, on the third day of the pause, one Communist capital called it an "insult," a second refused to give an answer and a third said the temporary stoppage did not matter.

"I am not now excluding a stop in the bombing as a step toward peace," Rusk said before applause interrupted him.

He added, however, that Communist leaders in Hanoi were unwilling to say what they would do if the bombing was stopped.

Another question from the floor suggested that the central intelligence agency "seems to be making policy completely removed from the public and even from the government."

Rusk replied, "The CIA does not make policy and does not initiate actions unknown to the high policy leaders of the government."

He added, "There is a tough battle going on in back alleys all over the world. It is not a field that can be left entirely to the other side."